

VOLUNTEER NEEDS AT TOMAH VAMC

Updated May 2011

Patient Visitors: Veterans are at the Tomah VA “24/7” and always appreciate someone who can spend some one-on-one time with them. Volunteers also take patients to the recreation center, the Canteen store and cafeteria, the library, the pond, bowling alley, etc.

DAV Drivers – Drivers in the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation Network drive donated vans and take outpatients to their VA appointments. There are vans at the following locations: Tomah, La Crosse, Stevens Point, Wausau, Marshfield, and Boscobel. Most appointments are at the Madison VA Hospital or Tomah VAMC. All scheduling is done by DAV. Volunteer drivers are required to have a VA-provided physical.

Waiting Room Attendant: Over a dozen waiting rooms throughout the Medical Center need frequent attention to insure magazines and newspapers are current; organize reading material; inventory and stock items such as coloring books/crayons for children, coffee cart; insure items are arranged neatly, etc. This volunteer would greet veterans and other guests, offering assistance as needed. A varied and gratifying assignment; this volunteer needs to be customer-focused.

Loving Spoonfuls: Many veterans need assistance at mealtime, either in preparing items to eat (opening milk carton, silverware, buttering bread, etc.) or in eating. Volunteers in the Loving Spoonfuls program receive additional training so they can assist at mealtimes and provide special one-on-one attention to a veteran while he enjoys his meal.

Golf Course Attendant – Volunteers work at the “Pro Shop” at the Veterans Golf Course, assisting patients with equipment (golfing, fishing, bikes, etc.) and accepting money from the paying customers. This assignment is available April – October.

Office Work: Various offices request the assistance of volunteers to answer phones, make copies, organize videos in Education, type a cookbook for a fund-raiser, file, help with mailings, compile folders, etc. Computer experience is not always necessary.

My HealthVet: My HealthVet is the gateway to veteran health benefits and services for veterans, providing information on various health problems and the opportunity for veterans to register and journal their medical conditions (blood pressure, weight, blood sugar, etc.) and order prescription refills on-line. Volunteers are needed to provide instruction to veterans; showing them how the site works and helping them register. The website is www.myhealth.va.gov/.

Tax Preparers: The Tomah VA’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program will soon begin its fifth season of operation. We are looking for tax preparers to help with the upcoming tax season. Training will be provided by the IRS and the group of volunteers, starting in December.

Scanner Operator: We’re going digital! We are looking for computer-savvy individuals who can scan paper documents into electronic folders.

Vendor Caller: Companies who do business with the VA need to be in a “vendor file” and have their information updated frequently. A volunteer is requested to telephone businesses, obtain the necessary information and encourage the businesses to remain active on the vendor list.

Book Cart: the Library would like a volunteer to wheel a cart with books, magazines, word puzzle books, etc. to the veterans on the units. Mobility and the gift of gab are required!

Telephone Visitor: Many veterans live alone and are somewhat isolated – few family or friends around. A volunteer can make a phone call to inquire as to how the veteran is doing, make chit-chat and get to know the veteran a little. Some veterans are referred by the provider for this kind of social service.

Library on Weekends/Evenings: The patient library is typically closed on the weekends, unless volunteers are available to provide coverage. Library services are more limited on the weekends and training is provided.

Hospice: The Tomah VA offers special end of life care, including two “hospice suites” for veterans and their spouses/family. Volunteers are needed to provide extended one-on-one care and attention to veterans during their final days. Training is provided.

Veterans History Project: The Library of Congress has created the Veterans History Project to encourage veterans of all wars to share their personal stories of service to our country. Volunteers interview veterans and record the interviews, which are then forwarded to the Library of Congress. Visit <http://www.loc.gov/vets/> for more information, including sample interview questions.

Memorial Service Volunteer: Our bereavement coordinator is looking for a volunteer to assist with preparing for the annual memorial service that remembers veterans, staff and volunteers who have passed away. The volunteer could help maintain the master list of individuals to be remembered, send invitations, and, help with the program itself.

Memory Boxes: We’ve purchased wooden a “shadow box” for each patient in our long-term care units. Families of the veterans are contacted to request photos and information about the veteran when he/she was in the service. A volunteer or two is needed to follow up with families, explain the program to them, encourage them to send us items, and log items in when they arrive.

Grants Writer: grants are occasionally desired for special projects and having someone to explore available grants and prepare the grant proposal itself would be greatly appreciated.

Stamp Enthusiast: We often receive donations of stamps but have no one among our ranks who collects stamps or knows what to look for when stamps arrive. If we had a volunteer who enjoyed stamp collecting, then we could encourage veterans to get involved with this hobby.

Newspaper Archivist: If you like to read newspapers or a more solitary assignment, we are looking for someone who can spend some time each week reviewing newspapers from our area to look for stories about the Tomah VA. Once found, the stories are clipped from the paper and glued on to a special form, with newspaper information written on the form.

Landscaping: We have an assignment for a volunteer(s) but it wouldn't be needed until the spring. The landscaping in the Memory Garden needs to be cleaned up and then kept up throughout the growing season.

Recreation on the Wards - Playing cards, especially Cribbage and Sheep head; Playing any number of Wii Games; Take vets to the Canteen-store or restaurant; Karaoke a few times a month or weekly, we have the equipment, not the time. Many of the vets enjoy it!